NOTRE DAME SIXTH FORM CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on Microsoft Teams on Thursday 26 February 2026 at 5.00pm

PRESENT
David Wright (Chair)
Justine Barlow (Principal)
Matthew DiClemente
Richard Hall
Alison Stuart

The quorum for a committee meeting is a minimum of two governors excluding the Principal.

IN ATTENDANCE:
Denise Hark- Clerk to the Corporation
Karen Petrillo – Director of Finance and Operations (DFO)
Rebecca Clacher – Clerk Designate
Father Michael Hall – Chair of Corporation (Observing)

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

1.00 **1.01** **1.02** **1.03**	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS** There were no apologies for absence received. The Chair brought the matter of succession to the position of the Chair of Finance & Resources Committee to the attention of governors. The Chair noted that he would provide support to the Chair until the next meeting and beyond. Any governors interested in the position were invited to speak with the Chair of the Committee or the Chair of Corporation.	**ACTION**
2.00 **2.01**	**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** There were no declarations made relating to items on the agenda.	
3.00 **3.01**	**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** Minutes from the Finance and Resources meeting held on 23 September 2025 had been included with the papers for the meeting. They were **agreed** as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
4.00 **4.01**	**REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING** Q: Further to minute 8.3 of the previous meeting has the implementation of the new HR system gone to plan? A: (JBW) There has been a smooth transition with no issues identified. Training has been provided to staff where required. The system can pull information together and provide reports.	

Notre Dame
CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

4.02	Q: Further to minute 6 is there any further information regarding International Students? A: (JBW) The remaining Upper 6th students are on track to complete their studies and they are the last group of designated International students.	
4.03	Q: Is there an update on minute 9 regarding the West Yorkshire Pension fund? A: (DFO) ISIO would like to move to the next stage. The college has received a 2.5% reduction fixed for 3 years on employer pension contributions.	
4.04	The DFO added that a decision needed to be made on whether to continue with ISIO or to step back. **Agreed**: That Notre Dame would step back from the ISIO initiative.	
5.00	**FINANCE REPORT**	
5.01	The DFO presented the key features from the January management accounts and highlighted the following points:	
5.02	This year looks like a steadier year. The College should find out by the end of the month whether it will receive in-year growth. If so, payments would be received in early Spring.	
5.03	There had not been any information received on an extension of the National Insurance Contribution grant which has only been funded until the end of March.	
5.04	The Funding Statement for the next academic year has not yet been received.	
5.05	An additional amount has been allocated in the budget for agency cover to provide cover for vacant posts.	
5.06	The outturn is 672k against the working budget of 540k. The DFO noted that there may be a concern over the surplus if a high level of in-year growth is received.	
5.07	The DFO reported that positive feedback had been received from the Deputy FE Commissioner.	
5.08	**Student Numbers** The Principal reported that there had been 4189 applications for places from September compared to 3955 at the same time last year. Based on similar strike rates per subject this could result in 3043 students on roll at the census point. The budget had been prepared with 2940 students.	
5.09	Q: How many students were on roll at census this year? A: (JBW) 2865 students.	

5.10	The Chair of Corporation noted that a discussion would be taking place at the March Corporation meeting around the mid to long term vision of the college. He advised caution and said that anything decided by the committee would be subject to ratification by the Board.	
5.11	**Rationale for New Finance System** The DFO had circulated a paper setting out the rationale for the new finance system for information and advice.	
5.12	The current system is workable but there are a number of processes that need to be carried out manually.	
5.13	A joint procurement exercise took place a year ago with Cardinal Newman College and three different suppliers were reviewed. The preferred provided is Xero for Education as it liaises with all systems. The college would not be tied into this as it is paid for on a monthly basis.	
5.14	It is planned to implement the new system in August as this is the safest month and XFE will be quiet during this time. A consultant will be used to help close down the existing system and set up the new one.	
5.15	Q: What will the scaling down of staffing in the finance department look like? A: (DFO) There are some older people in the department who are approaching retirement and potentially they might not need to be replaced.	
5.16	Q: Would the system enable departments to input their own orders? A: (DFO) Yes and it is linked with AI. It will take out a lot of duplication of work.	
5.17	Q: Will training be provided for staff? A: (DFO) Yes, training will be provided for all budget holders.	
5.18	Q: Who has control of the package is it Xfe or Xero? A: (DFO) It is Xero. When engaging with a provider for an IT system the college must make sure that the provider has Cyber Essentials certification. Xero is compliant with this.	
5.19	Q: As the system is cheaper than the other packages is there something that the others provide that they don't? A: (DFO) No it is a very good value for money solution. Integration on the current system would cost £7k but it is included in Xfe.	
5.20	Q: Do we have a contract with Xfe or is it a user licence? A: (DFO) We will have a user licence with Xfe.	

5.21	Q: How is the system backed up? A: (DFO) It is cloud based.	
5.22	Q: Will there be different levels of user? A: (DFO) Yes, budget holders will only see their own budget, but they will be able to have full visibility of this at all times. There will also be system admin, users to input and users to authorise.	
5.23	The DFO reported that as the chart of accounts was due to change with the DfE bringing in monthly reporting from April 2026 the college would adopt Academy ledger codes.	
5.24	The Chair summed up the discussion and noted that the committee strongly supports the introduction of the new system which will improve efficiencies and economies across the college.	
6.00	**STAFFING UPDATE** A written report was provided with the papers for the meeting.	
6.01	The Principal reported that the information from the TES Pulse Survey is now discussed at staff briefings. The latest survey results were pleasing with a high number of responses against question 10 which is about being proud to work at Notre Dame. There had been an increase in positive responses to the question around knowing and understanding college values.	
6.02	The SLT had reviewed the survey comments and had noted that there were no new comments in the workload and vision sections.	
6.03	A wellbeing time pilot had been introduced in November 2025 and will be reviewed in June. Positive verbal feedback on this had been received. The Principal noted that SLT were being encouraged to engage with it where they can. The operational working of the pilot had worked well and had not caused a burden for other staff.	
6.04	It was reported that there had been some staff sickness, but it was not as high when compared to the national picture.	
6.05	Q: Why are the staff sickness levels slightly increased? A: (JBW) This has been impacted by some long-term sickness which has skewed the percentages.	
6.06	The Principal reported that the college lives out its mission and ethos. One example being where a colleague has lost a spouse flexible arrangements are put in place to enable them to come back into College in order to remove the anxiety and stress from the situation.	

Notre Dame
CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

6.07	Q: Do we have an impact measure on the HR changes for 2026-27? A: (JBW) There are negligible changes regarding paternity leave which will impact on all organisations. The college will respond accordingly to the changes.	
6.08	Q: Is there anything else that is risk sensitive? A: (JBW) One aspect is that the college employs invigilators on an hourly rate, but they will become entitled to sick pay and holiday pay. This will have a financial impact and potentially a greater administrative burden.	
7.00	**POLICIES**	
7.01	The following policies were presented for approval:	
7.02	**Guidance on Building Contractors Working at Notre Dame** There had been a minor change to the policy. Notre Dame can exclude a member of the contractor's team from the site if they don't observe the College's code of conduct. **Agreed**: That the Building Contractors Working at Notre Dame guidance is approved.	
7.03	**Staff Health and Safety (including Lone Working) Policy** The policy has been updated to include lone working. **Agreed**: That the Staff Health and Safety policy is approved.	
7.04	**Leave of Absence Guidance** A governor asked where the inclusion on page 4 regarding IVF comes from and commented that it would usually be part of normal medical leave. The Principal agreed to ask HR to clarify the information. **Agreed**: That the Leave of Absence Guidance is approved, subject to the clarification above.	
7.05	**Student Support Fund and Bursary Scheme** There had been minor changes to the policy with the threshold having been increased. This would be further reviewed and would increase incrementally. **Agreed**: That the Student Support Fund and Bursary Scheme is approved.	
7.06	**Managing Sickness Absence Procedure** A direct telephone line to HR for reporting sickness absence has been installed and there is now a specific absence email address for reporting sickness. The Trade Union representative has been involved with the work on this and they are happy with the approach taken	
7.07	Q: How is this monitored across the college? A: (JBW) The HR Manager reviews the list to see if anyone reaches a trigger point for further action and SLT receives a weekly report.	

	Agreed: That the Managing Sickness Absence procedure is approved.	
7.08	**Support Staff Holiday Leave, TOIL and Averaging Hours** **Agreed**: That the Support Staff Holiday Leave, TOIL and Averaging Hours policy is approved.	
7.09	**Support Staff Pay Review request for re-grading and appeals Procedure** Q: Where does the Principal sit within the appeals process? A: (JBW) The Principal would not hear an appeal as it is only the Principal who can approve or reject a pay claim. The appeal would go to a panel of Governors from the Finance & Resources Committee. **Agreed**: That the Support Staff Pay Review request for re-grading and appeals procedure is approved.	
8.00	**CAPITAL & ESTATES** A report had been provided giving an update on the current capital works.	
8.01	The DFO reported that the mezzanine project was going well, and the current cost was £2.5m compared to the £2.76m agreed by governors.	
8.02	AHR have agreed that there will not be an overspend on the contractor costs.	
8.03	Q: What is the target date for completion? A: (DFO) The target is for it to be ready for 20 April, after the Easter break with furniture being delivered during week commencing 31 March.	
8.04	The DFO reported that the new Estates Manager had made a positive start. He was already making a difference and was looking at the priorities in the DfE Conditions report.	
8.05	There was no update from St Anne's.	
8.06	The issues with the Chapel were being resolved. The Diocese has looked at the roof issue and they wanted the work to be carried out over the summer holiday, but the Estates Manager wants to bring this forward to the Easter holiday.	
8.07	Q: Will the planned maintenance approach be brought back to committee for review? A: (DFO) This will be brought to the summer term meeting, and the Estates Manager will provide a plan of the work he wants to carry out over the summer holiday.	

8.08	**Estates Percentage Utilisation** A paper providing options for expansion were provided with the papers for the meeting.	
8.09	The Chair noted that Notre Dame continues to be the college of choice, but it is stretched on the current campus.	
8.10	The Chair of Corporation reported that a discussion had taken place at the Strategy and Governance Committee meeting, and the committee had agreed that it wants to maintain the character and mission of the college as the most important factor and to do this it also wants to reduce space utilisation.	
8.11	Q: Where are we up to with the CIF bid? A: (DFO) This will be known in May. A bid has been put forward for the boilers in Hume House at £750k and a new roof for St Francis and roof lights on the main building. There are funds for this in the planned maintenance budget if the college is unsuccessful with the bid.	
8.12	The Principal reported that at the time the paper was prepared the capacity funding bid from the DfE was anticipated but the criteria for application was unknown. It has been confirmed that £283m is available but this has been devolved to strategic authorities. The money must be for demographic growth and supporting the needs of young people. This must be efficient and provide value for money in the longer term.	
8.13	Another option to those listed in the paper is to refurbish the library at a cost of 1.3m, a bid of £1m for this had been made to the City Council but this had not been successful. A further option would be to demolish the Trinity building and to put up Portakabins. *(Father Michael left the meeting at this point 6.30pm)*	
8.14	Q: How likely is option one regarding the purchase of St Anne's? A: (JBW) There has not been any correspondence received from them.	
8.15	A governor commented that the condition of the Sister Dorothy Stang building is not to the same standard of the rest of the estate, but to replace this building would be the most disruptive and most expensive option.	
8.16	The Principal reported that when the college went to planning for phase one and two of the building work at St Elizabeth's, phase 3 was also discussed. This was to demolish the Sister Dorothy Stang building and to rebuild it providing 14 classrooms. Some space would need to be reallocated back to the Diocese. The plans and designs were discussed at length with governors during phases one and two.	

8.17	The Chair noted that there needed to be a wider and more strategic discussion at the Corporation meeting.	
8.18	The Principal reported that the bid would need to be submitted by 17 April which was during the last week of the Easter holidays. An Extra-Ordinary Corporation meeting may be needed to agree the bid.	
8.19	The Principal reported that she had reached out to the local colleges regarding the bid and she had also arranged a meeting with the Mayor of West Yorkshire, but this was after the submission date.	
8.20	Q: What is the capacity of being able to deliver all the initiatives as a need can be seen for all of them? A: (DW) All options are valid, but all the initiatives can't be carried out.	
8.21	A governor asked for further clarification on option one with the modular builds. The Principal said that the costings had been looked at and the design had been explored with the company. This would allow the estate to be flexed and was not cost prohibitive.	
8.22	The Principal advised that there was a need to wait until guidance around the devolved capital is available before options can be agreed.	
8.23	The Principal requested support in principle for further capital expansion. The committee agreed total support to the planned programme which retains the character of the college.	
9.00	**RISK ASSESSMENT** There were no additional items raised which needed to be referred to Corporation.	
10.00	**ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS** There were no items of Any Other Business raised.	
11.00	**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING** The date of the next meeting was agreed as 16 June 2026.	

The meeting closed at 6.53pm.